

Message Text

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UNCLAS HELSINKI 1591

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT KEKKONEN VISIT

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EDITORIAL JULY 30 IN LEADING HELSINKI DAILY
HELSSINGIN SANOMAT (CIR. 323,000) ON SUBJECT OF STATE VISIT OF
PRESIDENT OF FINLAND TO US. BEGIN TEXT:

URHO KEKKONEN HAS EARLIER VISITED THE UNITED STATES TWICE AS THE
PRESIDENT OF FINLAND: IN 1961, THE HOST WAS PRESIDENT JOHN KENNEDY
AND, IN 1970, PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON . TODAY BEGINS THE THIRD
TRIP,AN OFFICIAL STATE VISIT.

DURING THE 1961 VISIT, PRESIDENT KENNEDY SADI THAT THE BASICS
OF FINLAND'S POLICY OF NEUTRALITY ARE UNDERSTOOD BY AND RESPECTED
IN THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS AN IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY RECOGNITIOC
OF FINLAND'S THEN YOUNG POLICY OF NEUTRALITY.

IN 1970, PRESIDENT KEKKONEN COULC STATE HIMSELF THAT THE ATTI-
TUDES OF AMERICANS TO FINLAND'S POLICY HAD BECOME MORE FAVORABLE
AND PRESIDENT NIXON SPOKE FLATTERINGLY ABOUT FINLAND'S "POSITIVE
NEUTRALITY", ITS ACTIONS FOR PEACE AND LESSENING OF TENSION.
NIXON STRESSED FURTHER THAT FINALDN IS A FREIND OF THE UNITED STATES
"WITHOUT BEING AN ENEMY OF ANYONE".

THIS TIME THERE IS A FESTIVAL YEAR AND AN ELECTION YEAR IN THE
UNITED STATES. THE HOST IS PRESIDENT GERALD FORD WHO HAS RECENTLY
MET NUMEROUS NOTABLES IN WORLD POLITICS AND WHO,ON THE OTHER HAND,
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IS PREPARING FOR THE ELECTIONS. AS THERE ARE NO BILATERAL

PROBLEMS BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE UNITED STATES, THE TOP-LEVEL TALKS CAN CONCENTRATE ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS. AS THE HEAD OF STATE OF THE CSCE HOST COUNTRY, PRESIDENT KEKKONEN MAY WANT TO TALK ABOUT DISARMAMENT AND ABOUT CONTINUING THE POLICY OF DETENTE, ON WHICH THERE HAS BEEN AT TIMES SHARP DEBATE IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. OUR PRESIDENT HAS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIS OPINIONS ON THESE QUESTIONS TO LEADING MEDIA, TO THE PART OF THE US PUBLIC OPINION WHICH IS INTERESTED IN WORLD POLITICS AND WHICH ULTIMATELY INFLUENCES THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY.

FOR A LONG TIME, FINLAND HAS HAD A GOOD REPUTATION IN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH ORDINARY AMERICANS DO NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT OUR COUNTRY, THEY NEVERTHELESS HAVE A SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TO US. THERE IS NO REASON TO FEAR THAT THIS ATTITUDE WOULD CHANGE, BUT IT IS IN ANY CASE GOOD THAT WITH THE HELP OF A STATE VISIT, FINLAND BECOMES BETTER KNOWN AND OUR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE CULTIVATED. IT IS ALSO APPROPRIATE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC WILL MEET FINNS LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES ON WHOSE WORK THE GOOD REPUTATION OF OUR COUNTRY IS, FOR A LARGE PART, BASED. END TEST.

2. POST WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT COMMENTARY HERE REGARDING TRIP DURING PERIOD JULY 30- AUGUST 6.
GROFF-SMITH

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